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friends to the improvement of Africa, the purchaser of this cotton has agreed, that the seed, which is found to be in a state of perfect preservation, shall be wholly at the disposal of the Committee. A large quantity of it therefore, put up in small packages, so as to admit of its easy distribution, will be ready for transmission by the first conveyance.

By means of the same gentlemen who have favoured the Institution in this instance, a plentiful supply of seed of the best kind of cotton, though not in an equal state of preservation with that just mentioned, had been procured from a large cotton manufacturer at Manchester; and an opportunity has been taken of sending a part of it to Sierra Leone, by a vessel which left the river about a fortnight ago.

The Committee are aware, that it may be objected to this attempt to extend the cultivation of cotton, that the supply of that article is already equal to the demand; and that therefore the measures pursued by the Committee are impolitic. But they would observe in reply to this objection, that cotton is an article the growth of which in Africa will occasion less of competition with our own colonies, than almost any other article of tropical produce which could be named; and that it is important to be preparing sources from which a supply of cotton may be drawn, should circumstances arise to interrupt our commercial relations with America, or with the other places which now furnish it. But independently of these considerations it may be presumed, that in proportion as the natives of Africa supply us with the raw material, they will be capable of paying for a larger quantity of the manufactured article.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,

IN your last Magazine a writer signed Censor, so far engaged my attention as to draw from me some observations which I do not hesitate to submit to the public, through your impartial publication.

Censor *appears* on the side of justice and liberality. He censures freely, yet leaves himself open to deep wounds from the hands of any who are in the habit of wielding literary weapons. Censor though a professed advocate of Catholic Emancipation, observes, *however, that it is a subject perplexed with difficulties, arising from the passions of the two opposite parties.* Convincing arguments might be adduced to prove, that the penal and excluding laws are the cause of the passions alluded to. Where then is the difficulty by removing the cause, to remove the effect? or does Censor mean to take the subject by the wrong end, and to remove the cause by removing the effect? If he does, he will meet with difficulties and perplexities. I fondly hope he does not look or wish for them, yet, whenever I meet an attempt to equalize the passions of the oppressors and the oppressed, I am strongly inclined to suspect that the author belongs to the former class, whatever garb he may wear.

Censor, after some just and liberal reflections on the reviewer of Mr. Parnell's "History of the Penal Laws," finds fault with another writer, who, he says, *appears to have flattered the prejudices of the Catholic body, by praising them for remaining independent of the crown of Britain, in the appointment of their Bishops; and by commending them at the same time for their dependance on the See of Rome.* This, Censor considers as a glaring inconsistency, and takes occasion from it to deplore the weakness, the errors, the contradictions of human nature. While I join my lamentations to those of Censor, he will pardon me if I say, that there appears to me a greater subject for them in his reasoning than in that which he condemns. The inconsistency which he points out, proceeds solely from the confusion in which his ideas are involved; and if we but simplify and regulate the ideas, the inconsistency will disappear.

Censor's expressions of *dependance on the See of Rome*, mean too much or prove nothing. The present mode of appointing bishops, differs, it is well known, from the strict canonical mode, originally practised in the Catholic Church, which was by election. Any

thing like this mode became utterly impracticable in this country, when the electors and the candidates were proscribed by law, and when priest-catching as well as fox-hunting became a lawful amusement. Even under the present circumstances, I do not think that *a free* election would be very practicable, until the Catholic clergy are put on a more independent footing. The nomination, then, of their bishops necessarily fell to the See of Rome, at the wish and desire of the Catholics of Ireland. Let us now inquire what the See of Rome is. I will tell Censor that it is not that foreign despotism which the gross ignorance or furious prejudice of brawling corporation orators represents. In it there is no civil authority either claimed or allowed; no temporal emolument accrues to it from this country. Its authority is purely spiritual, and even in this spiritual authority there is nothing arbitrary; certain tenets, certain bounds and limits are established from the beginning; and a bishop in his diocese, or even a priest in his parish has his separate rights, which the See of Rome cannot invade. It watches over the universal Church, and if it attempts to defend or to propagate the Catholic Religion, it is only by evangelical means. There cannot be a difference between the see of Rome and the Catholics of Ireland, in their wish to see the Catholic Church of Ireland governed by worthy bishops. And if we consult experience, we see that the present mode of appointing bishops has given to the Catholics down to the present day, a succession of virtuous and exemplary prelates.

We now see to what our dependance on the see of Rome, which appears to Censor in so formidable a light, is reduced. It affects neither civil authority, nor civil liberty in this country: and it gives us such Bishops as we ought to wish for. Can we say so much of our dependance on the crown, in the nomination of our Bishops? We may consider the question under two points of view; this dependance either regards us as citizens of the British empire, or as Catholics. First then it is manifest that this dependance would increase the influence of the crown; and it was declared some years ago, by a vote of the House of Commons of Great Britain, that the *influence of the crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished.* Secondly, if we consider it as Catholics, we must see that it involves the ruin of our religion. To prove this it is sufficient to remark, what no man can deny, that it is a leading maxim of the English cabinet, to discountenance Popery, and that it never betrayed a greater zeal, or a keener desire for that object, than within the last twenty years.

But methinks, I hear myself called upon in a commanding voice, by a phalanx of splendid families, and splendid fortunes, who seem to be embodied for some time past, for the purpose of leading or driving the Catholic body. They tell me I misrepresent; that there is no question of a dependance on the crown, in the nomination of our Bishops; that there is *only* "a question of granting to his majesty a limited *veto*, under certain rules and restrictions, which would render it impossible for his majesty's *ministers* ever to attempt any thing injurious to our religion." With all due respect for these rich* and honourable men; for their knowledge of mankind, their zeal for religion, their piety, their charity, and their disinterestedness, I may be allowed to offer my sentiments: I have heard the plan laid down more than once; the rules, the conditions, the restrictions, are clear and satisfactory: but where is our security for the observance of them? I shall repeat the reasoning of a friend on this subject, to whom I listened with attention, when lately in the capital; it appeared to me somewhat like demonstration. This veto plan, said my friend, is a treaty between two parties; the stipulations are clearly specified, and are established on rational principles; but there is on the one side, irresistible power; on the other, no power whatsoever; there is no guarantee; there is then no security for the observance of the treaty; no certainty that the *veto* will not be changed into a *Mandamus*, and expediency substituted for right. I

* The rich man in the gospel, is not the favourite of Religion.

may be reminded, said my friend, of the great moral principles, which pervade the universe, which bind man to man, and nation to nation; I am ready to grant, said he, that they are sometimes acted upon, and are then a bulwark of security But I cannot think that this is always the case; for though a pagan philosopher teaches *that nothing can be politically right which is morally wrong*; yet christian cabinets are often actuated by different principles. Whether the English cabinet will hereafter think itself bound in the veto business to submit to the great principles of justice and good faith, we can only ascertain from its past conduct. Let that conduct be fairly determined, and in doing so, let us not go far back, lest obscurity might be pretended, and a change of manners, and a change of times be alleged; let us take the period nearest to us, from the infraction of the articles of Limerick, to the union inclusively; and say, if we are to judge of the future by the past, what must be our conclusion?

But, Mr. Editor, I fear I have trespassed on your time, and extended my observations too far for the limits of your publication. I have shown Censor, the fallacy and futility of his arguments; he compares terms which are not similar, and which do not bear a comparison. This is a source of error by which the authors of arguments may be misled, as well as those to whom the arguments are addressed. To avoid it, I would advise Censor never to raise a structure of reasoning on complex ideas, without first examining their foundation and soundness. Are the simpler ideas of which they are composed, founded on nature? are they well assorted, and closely and firmly united? If they are, he may with confidence proceed to enlarge and to embellish his building; but if they are not, at the first shock, *mole sua ruit*, and leaves not a trace behind.

CRITICUS.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,

WHEN I was first made acquainted with the intended publication of your Magazine, I hailed it as a happy era in the literary history of my country, anticipating the most beneficial result from such an undertaking, the general plan of which announced an intention to open such sources of knowledge, both local and general, as might eventually tend towards the improvement and amelioration of the condition of my countrymen.

For it will not be denied, either by the philosopher or the moralist, who has made human nature his study, that the progress of intellect in any country will be in proportion to the means of information its inhabitants have access to; by weighing and comparing the opinions of others on various subjects the mind is furnished with food for reflection, and when once the reflecting powers are set in motion, it is their nature to be progressive; by these means man begins to feel his own dignity; by habituating himself to think, his ideas assume a degree of consistency, and rising in the scale of rationality, he is enabled to acquire that integrity of principle, and that independence of thought, which, under the most trying contingencies, cannot fail of yielding him consolation and support. If an increase of virtue and happiness be the consequence of an increase of the diffusion of knowledge, every thing which tends to promote a purpose so noble and comprehensive, ought to meet with encouragement and support from the public at large. And it is with pleasure I observe your attention has been so much turned to things really useful, without at the same time wholly neglecting the entertaining; a proportion of which, when not suffered to sink into matter merely frivolous, ought to find a place in the pages of such a work. The grand fault of all the periodical publications which have hitherto appeared in this country (as far at least as I am capable of judging) has been in aiming so much at the *latter*, that they have nearly overlooked the *former*, and instead of adding to our stock of knowledge by enlarging our ideas on different subjects, or giving a just bias to the public taste, they have rather tended to enervate the mind; no wonder that they should have sunk into merited